

BALLET TODAY

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JULY 1951

1/-



PETER REVITT'S

BALLET GUYED

with a foreword by MARY CLARKE

is a book of brilliant caricatures of the leading dancers of the day. Peter Revitt's work needs no introduction to readers of "BALLET TODAY" and his genius for the witty comment in line is here crystallised in 36 dazzling sketches including Alexandra Danilova, Anton Dolin, Rosella Hightower, Alicia Markova, Leonide Massine, Tatiana Riabouchinska.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

I RECENTLY spent one of the most enthralling days of my life watching Madame Mathilde Kschesinska giving classes at the School of Russian Ballet when she came to London for a few days at the end of May in connection with the first examinations of the recently formed Federation of Russian Classical Ballet. Although she is now seventy-eight years old and lame from arthritis one is never in a moment's doubt but that here is a great Russian ballerina. Her large dark eyes are as bright and interested as a child's, her smile is an enchantment, the poise of her head with its proud profile is that of a supreme artist. After seeing her give a character

class I felt that I knew more about czardas, mazurkas and polonaises simply by watching her arms and face than I had learned in twenty years of performances. I was one of the audience that cheered itself hoarse for her in 1936 when she made a special appearance at the Royal Opera House at a gala performance given by Colonel de Basil's Ballets Russes. I felt when I met her this time as I had felt fifteen years ago, that here was what we meant by 'a great person'. At the end of the class she said to the dancers, in that clear French still so strongly flavoured by a Russian accent, 'You must dance not just with your body but with your heart, your face, your eyes. When I came out on the stage I would always present myself to the audience as though I were saying— "Here I am. I am with you. Are you with me? Then let us go together"'.

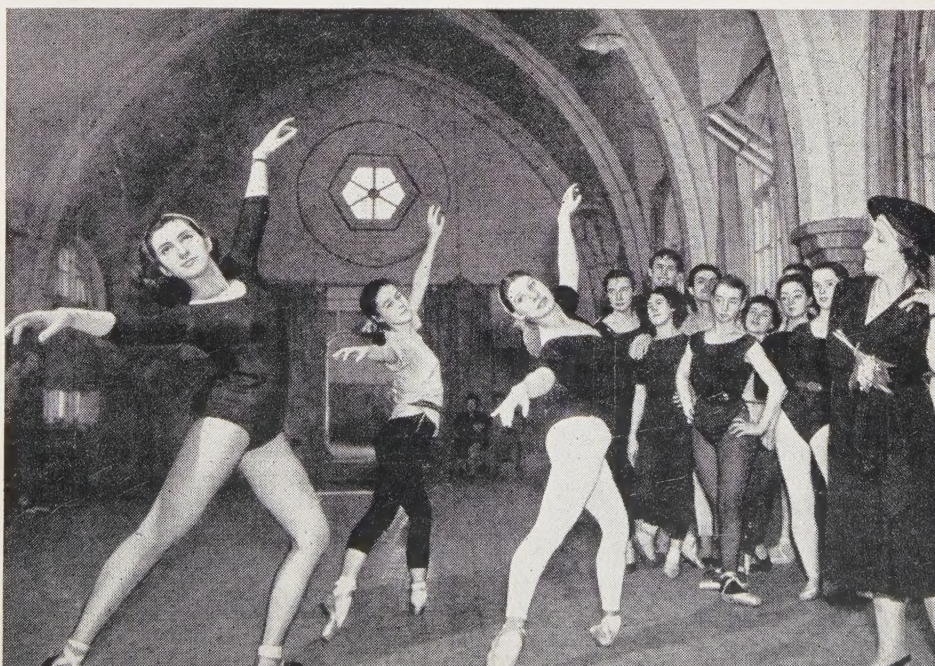
We talk a great deal nowadays about the much higher degree of technique demanded of the present generation of dancers and it is undoubtedly true that all round standards are immeasurably higher than they have ever been before. But is genuine greatness any less rare today than it was fifty years ago? I do not think so.

MRINALINI SARABHAI

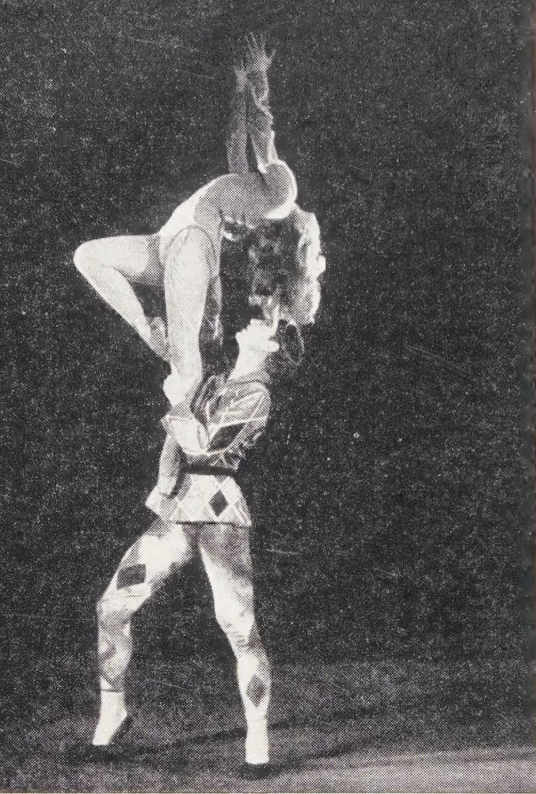
Mrinalini Sarabhai was also spending a few days in London during the latter part of May before she and her company travelled on to Brazil for a three months' tour of South America, the West Indies and Mexico. Hers is the first Indian company ever to

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MADAME MATHILDE
KSCHESINSKA GIVING
A CLASS AT THE
SCHOOL OF RUSSIAN
BALLET DURING HER
RECENT VISIT TO
ENGLAND.



Photograph by
Mirrorpic



Photograph by Baron

PATRICIA MILLER AND DAVID BLAIR IN 'HARLEQUIN IN APRIL'



Photograph by Baron

PATRICIA MILLER AS COLUMBINE WITH DAVID POOLE AND MAURICE METLISS AS THE UNICORN IN 'HARLEQUIN IN APRIL'

AN END AND A BEGINNING

By MARY CLARKE

THE Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in 1951 is at the end of the first cycle of its development and it therefore seems that now is a good time to do a little stocktaking. Five years of endeavour have resulted in the growth of a heterogeneous collection of young dancers into a company with a positive and quite individual personality. The repertoire, once comprised mainly of works handed down from the first company or experimental works of doubtful value, now contains several ballets native to the company and excellently performed by them. It is rather like the coming of age of a young girl; garments passed down from older sisters are now dispensed with and she appears in a wardrobe that reflects her own personality. The new wardrobe may not be very extensive as yet but it does contain genuine creations.

Nothing remains the same in ballet; that is at once its charm and its tragedy. Even as this is written plans are being carried through to enlarge the Theatre

Ballet for its American tour and to add full-length classical ballets to the repertoire. Whether these additions will unbalance the unity that has at last been achieved it is impossible to say and certainly when the company return from America they will need a long rest before they will be ready to show us their new quality.

In June, 1951, however, the Theatre Ballet was a lively organisation dancing increasingly well and in a style already different from that of their seniors at Covent Garden. They are at once more robust and more carefree, and the general standard of technical proficiency is high. Among the boys in particular there seems enormous potential talent and they are lucky in having a choreographer like Cranko who is interested in creating vigorous dancing for them so that at present they escape the malady of having too little to do. In Cranko's two most recent ballets, for instance, David Blair has proved himself a real creative artist and it is too bad that in developing this

side of his craft he has allowed his classical work to slip; both partnering and dancing in *Casse Noisette* last time I saw it were slap-happy and full of unattractive mannerisms. I have also been disappointed this season in Pirmin Trecu; his personality still warms the theatre but it is not very well supported by his dancing. Stanley Holden on the other hand goes from strength to strength; his Mr. O'Reilly, Boatswain and Pierrot in one season are a remarkable trio. We have seen too this spring a great development in Elaine Fifield's work; from a virtuoso she has grown into a young artist. Patricia Miller's charm and simplicity are lovely as ever although she has had little opportunity to widen her range. Stella Claire and Sheila O'Reilly are both excellent in character roles and in fact one might say that the whole company has a gift in this direction—and I mean in character dancing. Svetlana Beriosova, with her innately Russian style and lovely bearing, stands apart from the other dancers. This is not to say that she does not give admirable performances in a great variety of roles, but the difference in schooling is always apparent and I would say that she will be seen to greatest advantage in a larger theatre.

We have no official forecasts yet about the future and it is therefore a little difficult to know whether one is appraising a still developing self-sufficient unit or merely applauding the fruits of five years' endeavour now to be offered upon the altar of an American coast-to-coast tour and perhaps never to be seen again in precisely the same form. May we not perhaps attribute some of this year's achievements to the artists' knowledge that they had achieved some status and degree of permanency and had a Festival Season and an American tour to work for? Some idea of where we are all heading is invaluable to dancers, choreographers and even to the people who sit out in front.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

(Continued from page 3)

undertake such a tour but her recent success in Egypt inspires her with confidence that these Latin countries will also respond to a hitherto unknown art. On their return in the autumn the company will have a second London season. Mrinalini's first novel, written in English, has just been accepted by a London publisher for publication this winter.

P.W.M.

The Alfredo Valente photograph on the cover is of Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch in Ballet Theatre's 'Theme and Variations'.

An Irish Ballet

An Irish ballet entitled *An Coitin Dearg* (*The Red Petticoat*) was given its première at Cork during the fourth annual Cork ballet season given at the Opera House commencing May 18th by Miss Joan Denise Moriarty and her pupils. This ballet has a story by Michael MacLiammoir, the famous actor and director of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, with music composed by Aloys Fleischmann.

IT ENCOURAGES US TO RECEIVE LETTERS LIKE THE FOLLOWING :

Gentlemen,

Enclosed please find a cheque for \$1.90 for another 12 issues of your wonderful magazine *Ballet Today*. Please continue the subscription beginning with April, 1951 issue.

I've read your magazine for the past two years and have nothing but the highest recommendations for it. Please continue the fine work you have done in the past.

Yours very truly,

TED MASTERS

Los Angeles, California.

STELLA CLAIRE AND STANLEY HOLDEN AS THE DEBUTANTE AND THE DAGO IN 'FACADE'

Photograph by Helga Sharland



DANILOVA WITH FESTIVAL BALLET

THE Festival Ballet season at the Stoll Theatre continued with its very small repertoire which is already having the inevitable effect of causing over-playing in the ranks of the *corps de ballet* who are unable in any other way to stave off boredom. This is particularly noticeable in the crowd scenes of *Petrouchka* where the dancers have no very clear idea of what they are supposed to be doing, and in *Le Beau Danube* which so easily lends itself to exaggeration. This latter ballet is now a formless romp with every man for himself. Keith Beckett, who used to be very funny as the Manager, is now behaving as though this were the leading part and he is so clever an artist that he should be pulled up before it is too late. He has considerable pathos as a putty-faced *Petrouchka*, poignantly aware of the sawdust in his limbs and most dreadfully afraid of dying.

Mia Slavenska was to be guest artist during the last fortnight of the season (commencing June 18th). Meanwhile we have welcomed back the one and only Danilova. I do not myself consider that in pre-war days her *Odette* was one of her best roles—she is a Fokine and Massine rather than a Petipa dancer—and

now that a dozen or more little mediocrities can claim that they have danced the *Swan Queen* she might very well put this part behind her. We shall remember her *Odette* for the statuesque moments at the climax of a movement which have all the grandeur of Old Russia behind them.

As the Street Dancer in *Le Beau Danube* she remains incomparable. Never did anyone ruffle a skirt with such *chic* and such meaning and her gaiety and spirit have remained unimpaired since the first day she danced it. No wonder on the first night of her return (May 28th) the ovation she received from an adoring audience was continued by the company after the curtain went down.

Festival Ballet is still very short of strong soloists, both male and female. They have excellent top rank artists (everyone was most impressed at John Gilpin's gallant bearing and partnering as the Hussar though this will never temperamentally or physically be 'his' role) but the gap between them and the *corps de ballet* is at the moment unbridged.

P.W.M.

FESTIVAL BALLET revived Dolin's version of the *Pas de Quatre* on June 4th with an illustrious quartet of names to dance it—Markova, Danilova, Riabouchinska and Krassovska. Markova's performance best captured the period style and manner, partly because Dolin has devised a more interesting solo for her than for the other ballerinas. It is a dainty trifle, nonetheless, and the humours are likely to endear it to audiences that never heard of Taglioni, far less Chalon. The setting used to frame the picture, however, is in the worst possible taste; plain black curtains would be infinitely preferable.

On the same night we saw Danilova dance the Doll in *Petrouchka* and bring that elusive character to vigorous, robustious life. I do not care for Festival Ballet's production of this ballet—which gets more English and more light-weight with every performance—but Danilova made one forget her surroundings and revived, while she was on the stage, the true greatness of Fokine's ballet.

Another interesting performance that night was John Gilpin's in *Le Spectre de la Rose*. I had previously found Gilpin more athletic than dreamlike in this ballet but he has now softened and rounded his performance and combines great technical accomplishment with purity of style (his *port de bras* is particularly good) and with a sympathetic realisation of character. It is one of the best things he does.

M.C.

A NEW PORTRAIT OF ALICIA MARKOVA

Photograph by Eric Coop



A THOUGHT FOR THE FUTURE

By JAY NORMAN

A LETTER from a friend working in Moscow and able to spend a good deal of time at the Bolshoi, set me weaving strange fancies. Supposing, I mused, there were to be a second invasion of Europe and the West by Russian ballet and hundreds of dancers with choreographers and composers broke away and penetrated to all parts of the continent and to America? What then?

By all first-hand accounts the range of Soviet *danseuses* is enormous and they appear to be outstanding in virtuosity and that kind of plastic expressiveness of which we have had a glimpse in the work of Violetta Elvin. And who can believe otherwise, judging only from photographs of Soviet ballerinas, with a background of dancers in fluid and expressive poses? The *danseurs*, too, are almost certainly of a standard we have hardly even imagined, combining speed, precision and virtuosity with stage presence and personality. In some instances the categories of *danseur noble* and *demi-caractère* seem to be mean-

ingless. The ballets which are being produced are undoubtedly stupendous productions, designed to show the dancers to the utmost advantage, though Western artistic taste might not always agree with Soviet realism.

Such an invasion of the West could only bring new life into European and American ballet. But for how long? Is the Western mind tuned to creating ballets for just this kind of plastic brilliance? Would it not, perhaps, be only an Indian Summer, with classical works blazing forth in new glory for a decade and then fading to leave the picture as before? Or perhaps it would mean a resurgence of international ballet, an interchange of ideas between East and West, with creative minds from both spheres producing new works of lasting value. But whether for good or ill this is so very unlikely to happen that it must be but a fanciful dream.

Lacking this improbable event what have we in the West to look forward to in the future? The traditional Russian style is gradually dying out; it is kept precariously alive in various corners of the West by a handful of teachers, dancers and choreographers. Not unnaturally, however, little new work of any importance is being created to foster the traditional Russian style, possibly partly because the material to hand, while outstanding in its own way, is not brilliant in those particular qualities that made the Russian trained dancers famous. Thus we have Western dancers often giving remarkable and sincere renderings of the classics but otherwise excelling mainly in national ballet, generally based on a fusion of traditional styles from Russia, Italy and France.

There have been attempts to pour new wine into old bottles, as in the work of George Balanchine, and, while it is true that his ideas are sufficiently traditional, at least superficially, to be readily assimilable by dancers from many parts of Europe, the marriage of the national American style to the traditional Russian one is uneasy and can, in the end, lead only to sterility. In this country we have the Markova-Dolin attempt to revive international ballet on a grand scale, an attempt that, without choreographers, dancers and designers of sufficient calibre, might only prove to be the last feeble flicker of a dying torch.

The future, then, as has been fairly generally accepted, would seem to be with national ballet; in America with the athletic, modern style, incorporating many kinds of modern dance techniques as in Robbins' *Fancy Free*, and American 'folk' ballet, as *Billy*, *the Kid* and *Rodeo*. No doubt the Free Dance has

MADAME TAMARA KARSAVINA REHEARSES ANITA LANDA AND JOHN GILPIN IN 'LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE'





ANTON DOLIN AS ALBRECHT AND ALICIA MARKOVA AS GISELLE, SKETCHED BY JUNE RYAN

much to say in America and it seems strange that the neo-classical dance, often negating the natural significance of movement, should be able to take root in the same soil. In France, the Opera style keeps alive a tradition which is still recognisably French and which lends itself readily to such modern works as those of Cocteau which will, no doubt, in due course give way to some other no less penetrating French symbolism. In England we have a style of our own which at present seems in danger of atrophy through the enthusiastic acceptance and adoption of alien ideas; I mean the English tradition of mimed play. The English have always excelled at the lyrical and dramatic—in painting, the small landscape and the intimate portrait; in music, the folk ballad and the suite; in literature, the sonnet and the short novel of ideas; in the theatre, the operetta, the character drama, the chamber ballet.

It is fairly generally acknowledged that one of the finest English ballets ever to be created is de Valois' *The Rake's Progress*, a danced work in the English tradition. Ashton's short ballets are purely English in their gentle subtlety, lyricism and mood. It is

true that some ballets produced in this country during the past few years have been rather overloaded with mime, but on a statistical reckoning their number is not large, especially when a distinction is made between mime and danced action. Far more ephemeral work has been produced in other styles, particularly in a style which might be called 'classical whimsy', perhaps the product of a Peter Pan attitude among young choreographers? Still less should we follow the path of neo-classicism, which is not our natural métier. Our own best work is probably equal to anything produced in other countries, including Soviet Russia.

If we develop our own native tradition of comedy and tragedy, through danced characterisation as in *The Rake's Progress*, we need fear no death of Russian ballet. We cannot live for ever on a classical diet, nor eat up the heritage of the past, and a new balletic invasion from Russia is likely to remain a fancy. Fokine required that a ballet should be an expressive whole as regards costume, scenery, dance and music. We, in England, can fulfil that requirement better than anyone if we so choose.

SOME RECENT BALLET FILMS

By PAMELA M. PRICE

THOSE of us who live in London have in the past year or two seen quite a number of ballet films, either in the commercial cinemas or at special film-shows organised by ballet clubs and other societies, so perhaps this is a good opportunity to try to sum up the critical standards we have adopted and get a clearer idea of the possible lines of development along which the film-makers can move.

First and foremost, we must, I think, insist on uniformity of style in a ballet film. All first-class work in the entertainment field, whether it be a film, a play or a revue, must have a measure of unity, an all-over design, a clear and definite conception which comes from the producer's knowing exactly what he

JOHN GILPIN IN 'LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE',
SKETCHED BY JUNE RYAN



wishes to achieve and setting out purposefully to fulfil his aim. If he has no such aim and no such clear conception himself, it is quite unreasonable to expect his audience to find his work anything but unsatisfactory.

Consider first of all a ballet which already exists in stage form. Here the director can adopt either of two techniques. He can film the ballet more or less straight, that is, in the way that much television ballet is made, utilising only a few camera angles, against a static background, with possibly a few close-ups. On the whole he sticks to the general stage pattern, adapting his technique to that of the choreographer.

The other method is to adapt the choreographer's technique to his own. Then out comes the whole bag of tricks; fades, dissolves, montage, superimposition, trick photography, multiple sets, changing vistas and all the common language of the film. A director choosing this method of filming a well-loved "classic" is, of course, letting himself in for a great deal of adverse criticism from the purists who throw up their hands in horror at the thought of anyone pulling Petipa to pieces or monkeying about with Massine.

Graduation Ball, performed by de Basil's Ballets Russes and filmed in France in 1949 is, generally speaking, an example of the first type of film treatment. It is substantially the same ballet which so delighted us at Covent Garden in 1947; the choreography of the solos, for instance, appears identical with the stage version. Film technique is used very skilfully in many places; the final close-up is a clever and amusing touch which adds to the charm of the whole. Unfortunately, however, there are several defects which mar the film. The absence of colour is most keenly felt, the music seems to be badly synchronised and, for instance, ruins the famous Drummer's solo which depends so much on split-second timing and meticulous accuracy of execution. The camera lens seems incapable of taking that wide view which is essential for the appreciation of the pattern and design of the ensemble dances. Far too often the dancers are a meaningless jumble of figures without coherence or attractiveness. In spite of these faults, I would say that this film is perhaps the best effort so far to film an already-existing ballet—it misses the colourful settings of *Gaité Parisienne* and the outstanding dancing of Massine and Toumanova in *Caprice Espagnol* but viewed as a whole, it does offer some indication of what can be done with this technique.

The other Ballets Russes film *Swan Lake* is a horrible hotchpotch of styles. It attempts to put the stage version of this ballet into an open-air realistic setting and merely succeeds in being ridiculous and unconvincing. It changes from one style to the other with careless abandon; one moment we see a real swan on an apparently volcanic lake which emits enormous puffs of steam—the next minute this creature dissolves and hey presto! we have none other than G  n  v  re Moulin. A few moments later she is joined by a troupe of swan-maidens who come tripping through the grass and trees for all the world like a dancing class giving an exhibition at the vicarage garden party. This combination of realistic background and young ladies in tutus does not convince. The film can show us enchanted beings floating through space or gliding over the surface of a fantastic lake against a background of film-designer's

dreams, but sixteen girls tiptoeing through the tulips remain clumsy human beings afraid of getting their feet wet.

The absurdity of this mixture of styles is demonstrated in the sequence when the hunters are about to shoot at the swans. At the beginning of the film we have seen these young men and Prince Siegfried searching among the rocky crags on what might be a realistic hunt. Now these same young men rush in, take up their stance as on the stage and level their cross-bows about two feet away from what is figuratively speaking, a sitting target.

There is absolutely no uniformity of style about the whole film and I cannot believe that anyone seeing *Swan Lake* for the first time in this form would have the slightest desire to see it on the stage.

Another method of filming *Swan Lake* is shown in the Soviet film *Ballerina* recently released for public

MOIRA SHEARER AND EDMOND AUDRAN IN THE DRAGONFLY BALLET FROM 'THE TALES OF HOFFMANN'



exhibition in this country. Here there is no attempt to show the ballet as anything but a stage piece. Indeed we are not allowed to forget for one instant that we are in the theatre; shots of stage-hands, the stalls, the gallery, the props man, the ballet mistress and goodness known who else—alternate with tantalising glimpses of Ullanova and the *corps de ballet*, until we are ready to scream. I do not think any reasonable ballet-lover would condemn the film-maker for altering the viewpoint from which we see a particular dance sequence—indeed often he is only doing what we ourselves would do were we a little richer and seats easier to obtain—but it is asking too much to expect the spectator to suffer in silence the breaking up of an exquisite *pas de deux* in order to investigate the facial peculiarities of the stage doorman or the ballerina's mother. In spite of these blemishes I think this film did indicate that, as far as the classics are concerned, a theatrical background is infinitely more suitable than open-air or natural settings.

The latest arrival on the ballet-film front is the dazzling *Tales of Hoffmann* which, whatever its merits and demerits as a film, does contain some interesting dance sequences, though not all uniformly successful. The Dragonfly ballet in the Prologue is a straightforward cinematograph-ballet in which hideous costumes, over-decorated and vulgar settings and clever trick shots completely overshadow the undistinguished choreography which is acrobatic in movement, and curiously static in design. The synopsis says "Hoffmann sits in the auditorium watching a performance of the Dragonfly ballet . . ." yet it is inconceivable that this ballet could take place in any theatre and, in any case, not at the period in which the story is set.

The dance sequence in the Olympia episode is, however, well filmed and attractively choreographed, the movement being well suited to the music, cinematograph technique used carefully and intelligently to give a feeling of space and lightness to the ballet. Unfortunately, owing to the conventions of the production, one is asked to believe that Moira Shearer can perform a series of *pirouettes*, flitting about the screen on *pointe* whilst, at the same time, singing a coloratura aria! That she should dance to a song is acceptable but that a ballerina should be required to dance whilst mouthing the words of an aria is taxing both the audience's common sense and the dancer's ability to look pleasant while performing *pirouettes* with her mouth wide open.

One short sequence at the end of the film, however, was to me a revelation. Four dancers (or was it the same dancer?) each in different parts of the film frame perform a series of supported arabesques—each does the same series of movements but these are viewed from four different camera angles. One might call this the "clinical" approach to filming

ballet. It would, of course, be most useful in the teaching of ballet but as this short sequence proved, it can be decorative as well. This is the best possible use of film technique to enhance the beauty of movement—something the film camera can do so well.

Now we are to look forward to Sir Alexander Korda's promised full-length version of *The Sleeping Beauty* with Fonteyn. It cannot be less than interesting but all I ask is that some consistent style be adopted. Please, let us not have a backstage shot of a dancer leaping from the wings to disappear a few moments later by floating out of the Palace window among the twinkling stars, or a sequence of the Prince making his slow and tortuous way among the enchanted forest, and then a close-up of the same gentleman shuffling his feet in a rosin box! It is only consistency of style which can preserve illusion, whether it be in the theatre or on the screen. To shatter it before the fall of the curtain or the caption "The End" is cheating and the audience will be quick to realise it.

Royal Danish Ballet Festival

The next issue of *BALLET TODAY* will contain a special article on the second Annual Royal Danish Ballet Festival. All the English ballet critics who were fortunate enough to have been able to attend this Festival were unanimous in their opinion that the Royal Danish Ballet is one of the great companies of the world though far too little has hitherto been known about it. *BALLET TODAY* hopes to be able to give its readers all those details about which they would most like to know—its style, its repertoire and its dancers.

London Ballet Circle

Franklin White of Sadler's Wells Ballet gave a talk on Modern American Dance on June 17th.

On July 15th Beth Dean will give a recital of Aboriginal Dancing. There will be no lectures during August but on September 16th Violetta Elvin, ballerina of Sadler's Wells Ballet will talk on Ballet in the U.S.S.R.

Lectures and demonstrations take place at the Salle Erard, Great Marlborough Street, London, W.1.

Membership is open to all dance lovers in London and the provinces. Details from Stanley W. Hawkins, 132 Kensington Park Road, London, W.11.

A CHANGE OF POLICY

FINAL WEEKS OF BALLET THEATRE'S NEW YORK SEASON REFLECT FURTHER CHANGES IN ARTISTIC DIRECTION: NOTES ON SUMMERTIME DANCE, U.S.A.

By ARTHUR TODD

THE closing two weeks of Ballet Theatre's spring season at the Met brought forth four new premières: Babilée's *L'Amour et Son Amour*; Carmelita Maracci's *Circo de Espana*; Alicia Alonso's first choreographic effort, *Ensayo Sinfónico* and Enrique Martínez' *Tropical pas de deux*. Also, there were Youskevitch's first New York appearances in *Romeo and Juliet*, Alicia Alonso's magnificent *Giselle* and Agnes de Mille's guest appearance in *Rodeo*. However, nearly all these works and performances were overshadowed by the marked shift in artistic policy that Ballet Theatre has been taking this season.

Quite bluntly, Ballet Theatre has been going through a period of considerable change and upheaval the last year or so and the results are now becoming increasingly evident. First of all, Hugh Laing and Diana Adams withdrew from the company before the European tour and Nora Kaye followed suit early this year. Certainly, no one star or stars should be indispensable to a company. However, since their de-

partures, the company has been so busy touring and preparing new works that the masterpieces that have been so long the backbone of the repertoire have been sadly neglected. *Fancy Free* and *Pillar of Fire* were not performed in New York at all this spring and those who saw Tudor's *Jardin aux Lilas*, his epic *Romeo and Juliet* and *Gala Performance* wished that these, too, might have been by-passed until they had been properly rehearsed. The same held true of Loring's *Billy the Kid* and Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*. All this is unfortunate because Ballet Theatre has four magnificently gifted and versatile permanent stars in Alonso, Youskevitch, Kriza and Moylan. However, it is just too much to expect these four to carry the entire regular repertoire while rehearsing and appearing in new works as well. The same holds true of the soloists (and there is much promising material here) and the *corps de ballet*, much of which is relatively new and sometimes inexperienced.

In the absence of the institutional assets (creativity, experimentation, a balanced repertoire and a varied personnel) that have won Ballet Theatre its pre-eminent position in the field of American ballet, we were, instead, presented with a series of guest stars, an assorted array of ballets and *divertissements*. Fortunately, two of the guest stars were Jean Babilée and Nathalie Philippart, both of whom won a deserved welcome, and Colette Marchand, who proved what a really gifted dancer she is in the proper setting.

Babilée's second vehicle, *L'Amour et Son Amour* provided a marked contrast to *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*. As *Psyche*, Mlle. Philippart proved what a beautiful dancer she is and her lyricism, sustained *legato* movements and dynamic qualities showed to fine advantage. She was superbly partnered by Mr. Babilée, the great virtuoso, as Cupid. It has been a consistent delight to watch these two dancing together throughout the season and their rapport is totally complete and sincere. Though its choreography is not markedly brilliant, this is an eminently satisfactory piece for the Babilées. Cocteau's settings were also definite assets, especially the panoramic view of the heavens, and only his costume for Mlle. Philippart, a most unflattering one, was found wanting.

Circo de Espana, Carmelita Maracci's augmented suite of dances from her own concert repertoire, is a

ALICIA ALONSO AND IGOR YOUSKEVITCH IN WILLIAM DOLLAR'S
'CONCERTO'

Photograph by George Karger, Pix Inc.



bitter, ironic, episodic satire on the bull ring, tango dancers and selfish women. Miss Maracci, who is by turn balletic, Spanish and modern, is one of the most compelling dance personalities active in the America scene today and her own presence gave this work a fire, force and focus that were not always present when Alicia Alonso took over the role after Miss Maracci's two initial appearances. Miss Alonso necessarily omitted one of the dominant solos that called for a fantastic castanet technique (though she did use them well in another section) and her performance elsewhere was valid and credible though pallid in comparison to its originator's. Paul Godkin, as the tango dancer, was superb, turning in one of his best performances of the season. And Rico Lebrun's superb set, which employed a huge bull motif in the ring itself, was far and away the finest decor of the season.

Miss Alonso's first venture as a choreographer, however, was a considerably different story. Her *Ensayo Sinfónico*, based on Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, and previously in the repertoire of her own Cuban company a few seasons ago, is gracious, elegant and made imaginative use of movement patterns and directions. Employing only four girls and four men (there are no stellar roles though Miss Alonso herself appeared in the ballet at later performances), this was a commendable choreographic debut for any artist and only the deplorable background—a marble-ised effect that resembled a mausoleum—was regrettable.

The final work of the season, by the company's Enrique Martínez, *Tropical pas de deux*, for Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch. Set to the Cuban tempos of Amedeo Roldan's music, this effort combined the classicism of ballet with some frequently native Spanish and Negro movement qualities and the result was ineffectual since these styles just don't mix. Alonso and Youskevitch, however, danced this material admirably.

Youskevitch, as a matter of fact, has been at the very top of his magnificent form all season and only his Romeo was a disappointment because it lacked the mercurial, dynamic shadings that Hugh Laing always gave this role originally. Agnes de Mille's return to *Rodeo* was noteworthy for her own personal performance and because the rest of the cast, moved by her presence, turned in their best rendering of this work for the season. Also distinguished was Alicia Alonso's deeply felt and sincere performance in *Fall River Legend*. Since Miss Alonso is a more versatile artist than Nora Kaye, her Giselle, as might be expected, was magnificent, ranking with the best two or three depictions of the role that have been seen in New York during the past fifteen years.

Ballet Theatre is now in South America, on an ex-



MARY ELLEN MOYLAN AND IGOR YOUSKEVITCH IN THE
'BLACK SWAN' PAS DE DEUX

Photograph by Maurice Seymour

tended summer tour, and returns to the Met for a three-week fall season in New York that will begin on September 20th. By that time, we hope, the company will once more have its wonderful assets in the first rate shape that they deserve. This, plus the return of the Babilées, for the season and the tour, may find Ballet Theatre back in its dominant position.

NEWS AND NOTES—SUMMERTIME DANCE, U.S.A.

As is generally customary when the hot weather rolls around again in New York, dance takes to the hills and the cooler country-side. Outstanding events on the summertime calendar include two major schools and festivals and both will feature important figures in the dance world.

The School of the Dance and the American Dance Festival, directed by Martha Hill and Ruth Bloomer at Connecticut College, New London, Conn., will have the following noted figures on its faculty: Doris Humphrey, Louis Horst, José Limon, William Bales, Sophie Maslow, Jane Dudley, Delia Hussey, Ruth Lloyd, and Els Grelinger. Mary Wigman, the noted German modern dancer, who was originally scheduled to teach and lecture here after an absence of nearly twenty years, is unable to make the journey. Martha Graham agreed to take her place though she had planned to take a holiday. During the final festival week—August 13th through the 19th—the Dudley-Maslow-Bales trio expect to produce at least

two new works at Palmer Auditorium. José Limon, America's top male dancer in the modern field, will premier two major new works, *Dialogues* and *Tonan-zintla*, both of which had their world premières during the spring in Mr. Limon's Mexico City Season.

The tenth season of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and its older, co-related University of the Dance, both founded and under the direction of Ted Shawn, is launching one of the most ambitious seasons in its history. As in previous years, both classes and programmes will be made up of equal sections of ballet, modern and ethnic dance. Especially important is the news that Antony Tudor will be heading the ballet wing of the school, with the very able assistance of Margaret Craske, and he will also be responsible for the ballet sections of the weekly programmes. To this end, he has formed the Jacob's Pillow Resident Ballet, a group of young dancers that includes Susan Ames and Zebra Nevins, of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and Mark Hertsens, Harvey Jury and Jack Morts. Mr. Tudor's guest stars will include most of the major dancers of the New York City Ballet with Nora Kaye, Hugh Laing and Diana Adams slated to launch the opening programme. Later, Melissa Hayden and Herbert Bliss will dance together on a week-end programme and, later, so will Maria Tallchief, who will be partnered by Michael Maule, the young dancer who has made such marked progress this season. Tanaquil LeClerc will appear in Kate Forbes' *Handel's Garden*, Mark Hertsens' new ballet, *La Nuit*, will be presented by the resident company. This group will also appear in a new Tudor work and it is also likely that Mr. Tudor will stage *Judgment of Paris* with Lillian Moore in a featured role. All in all, this certainly looks like a prolific summer for Mr. Tudor and for his audiences.

Other noteworthy stars at Jacob's Pillow will include Ruth St. Denis, José Limon, Jean Leon Destine, La Meri and Iva Kitchell. Ted Shawn will choreograph and appear in *Song of Songs* and La Meri and Peter di Falco will have the other principal roles.

Despite this annual exodus to the country, New York dancers and audiences had considerable activity during June. Mary Skeaping, the Ballet Mistress of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, has been giving a special June course of technique and variations from the Sadler's Wells' repertoire at Thalia Mara and Arthur Mahoney's School of Ballet Repertory. And, after returning from their initial triumphs in Chicago in late April, the New York City Ballet returned to its home base, the New York City Center, and put four new works into rehearsal for their three-week season which opened on June 5th. These new ballets include Jerome Robbins' *The Cage*, set to Stravinsky's *String Concerto in D*, and featured Nora Kaye in the



Photograph by George Karger, Pix Inc.

LUCIA CHASE WHO MADE A GREAT PERSONAL SUCCESS IN HERBERT ROSS' 'THE THIEF WHO LOVED A GHOST'

first role designed for her specific talents since she joined the company. Ruthanna Boris, a formerly featured ballerina with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, choreographed *Cake Walk*, a character ballet to traditional minstrel music and employed Robert Drew's original sets and costumes from *Blackface*, a work originally put on by Ballet Society five years ago. Todd Bolender's *The Miraculous Mandarin*, based on Bela Bartok's *Die Schone Mandarin*, had to be postponed, but George Balanchine devised a new piece for Maria Tallchief and Andre Eglevsky, *Capriccio Brilliant*, to Mendelssohn's music of the same title, before he left for Paris to be guest choreographer at the Opera. These new works in the New York City Ballet's season will be reviewed at length in the next issue.

Ballet on Record

By PETER CRAIG RAYMOND

GISELLE IN TWO INSTALMENTS

Collectors who wished to add the Royal Opera House Orchestra's recording of *Giselle* to their shelves must have spent a nail-destroying March.

For some reason (not without precedent) the four discs which make up this *Giselle* set were issued two by two. The Overture, *Giselle's* entrance with the Prince, "Mad scene", Valse, Solo and Danse Generale were issued on HMV C7834 and 5. For April the

set was completed by C7841 and 2 which held the music of the Finale, Wilis, Meeting of the Prince and Giselle and the *Pas* from Act II.

On the whole Irving's work with this orchestra sounds somewhat better on shellac than in the Opera House. On record it has the added advantage that no dancer has to follow the whims of the baton. But this set of the Adam score (arranged, of course, by Jacob) is worth possessing.

Those who possess the Constant Lambert recording (with the R.O.H. Orchestra), previously issued, need not worry over the newcomer.

AND CHECKMATE IN ONE

Two English composers have been represented in this quarter's ballet harvest. Bliss by *Checkmate* and William Walton by his *Facade* suite.

Still rankling over having sat through De Valois' *Checkmate* twice, when the programme coyly promised *Mam'zelle Angot*, I find little in this Irving-conducted set (on Columbia DX 1718-20). As an addition to our records of English ballet scores, it is, however, welcome. The Arthur Bliss *Miracle in the Gorbals* music is also still available on Columbia.

Walton's *Facade* is by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Lambert (Columbia DX 1734-6). This orchestra is still showing itself abundantly capable of handling music for dancing in a manner which must put to shame the unsympathetic tempi (to say nothing of the noises) of the Opera House Orchestra.

On the sixth side of this set (*Facade* occupies five sides) some of Lambert's *Ballabile* arrangement of music by Chabrier has been waxed.

The performance is good whatever one thought of the ballet.

THEATRICAL MUSIC

Arnell's ballet music *Punch and the Child* (Columbia, LX1391-2 and LXS1393) has no such appendage . . . it leaves a sixth side an empty, grooveless blank. Better perhaps.

Scribbling on the record cover at my first playing of this set, I find I have used the word "sure" twice. Sureness of measure—sureness of direction. This enviable confidence is first brought out in the Child's Dance which follows the Prologue. The second quality—theatrical effect—is inherent throughout the suite.

The Storm music is by no means the best storm impersonation ever conceived—but it strikes me as the best *balletic* translation of storm I have heard.

It is ballet music with the composer's genius as much with the dancer as with the orchestra.

STRAVINSKY TRIO

Decca have now fulfilled their "trilogy of Ballet music by Stravinsky". Available on Decca (at £2 a disc, no less) are *Petrouchka*, *Rite of Spring* and *Firebird*.

All three sets are by L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande under Ernest Ansermet. I have previously reviewed both *Sacre* and *Petrouchka* in *Ballet Today*. The numbers are *Petrouchka* on LXT2502; *Sacre* on LXT2563; *Firebird* on LX3045.

The *Petrouchka* set should be particularly welcomed by readers who have seen the Stravinsky/Benois ballet at the Stoll Theatre.

Should we welcome a ballet *after* Stravinsky/Benois . . . with music *after* Stravinsky . . . decor *after* Benois . . . choreography *after* Fokine. The dancing of Krassovska or Danilova may force an affirmative; but the music, at least, is better heard on this Long-Playing wax.

UNOBTAINABLE "MUST"

From New York has come a copy of one of those books so definitely to be called a "must"—but so hard to supply in this regulation-tortured country.

The temptation is not to be resisted, however, with Robert Lawrence's *Victor Book of Ballets and Ballet Music*.

This has everything. Full synopsis of every ballet (and, godsend, this includes all those of Ballet Theatre and the New York City Ballet for which, alone, the work would be invaluable); discographies, bibliography, a compact history of Ballet and a resumé of its music. With over five hundred pages to compass comfortably this encyclopedic volume of data it should be added that Lawrence has made it readable and—with scores of illustrations—attractive.

Yes, unobtainable but—my apologies—a "must".

Balletomane's Bookshelf

BALLET, by CECIL BEATON. Wingate, 15/- net.

FONTeyN: IMPRESSIONS OF A BALLERINA, by WILLIAM CHAPPELL. Rockliff, 21/- net.

I have seldom read such an aggregate of stilted, egotistical nonsense as this. For if Mr. Beaton's effort is the less unpleasing, it is merely because of its brevity and comparative freedom from the clichés of poetic abandon to which Mr. Chappell is so excessively addicted. It is not, however, altogether lacking in charm. *A farouche* quality that derives, I imagine, from the Edwardian military or sporting memoir whose laconic emotionalism apparently provides the model for Mr. Beaton's 'style'. The early part of the book consists of a cursory account of the more obvious events and personalities in the history of twentieth century ballet, and, more important, their effect on the author's aesthetic susceptibilities. Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson, for example, drove him "to imitate (her) gambols in the bathroom, tearing apart my mother's carefully conceived flower arrangements for the purpose". And naturally it was

not long before "the floating miracle in white that was Anna Pavlova, dressed as a swan . . . transported (him) into the realms of pure love". Those readers unacquainted with Mr. Beaumont's or Mr. Haskell's works on the Diaghilev period are amply catered for—so indeed are those as yet unacquainted with ballet at all. They will discover that "Diaghilev had immense culture, unbelievable vitality, and . . . amazing patience"; that "Beaumont knew (and still knows) everything there is to know about the ballet"; that Nijinsky "was the faun whose brilliant afternoon ended in the tragic evening of the half-sane"; or that, in *Le Tricorne*, Picasso created a "brilliant clean-coloured setting" that "was even further removed from the usual fustian settings, or painted backcloths, wings and flats seen on the London stage"; and so on.

The latter part of the book is devoted to the author's own contribution to the ballet. Yet although an earlier awe is now replaced by the familiar nickname, the atmosphere is much the same. Interest may awaken momentarily with Mr. Beaton's descriptions of the genesis of *Apparitions*, *Les Illuminations* and *Les Sireènes*, but only to lapse once more before an onslaught of the conventional and obvious. Fifteen shillings is really far too much to pay for such a curious amalgam of antiquated chit-chat and "Who was Who?" But the pictures are lovely.

Mr. Chappell's book is an essay in hyperbole, tautology and general rhetoric. Disavowedly biography, it is in reality a romantic autobiography, a *Symphonie Fantastique* in which Miss Fonteyn periodically intrudes as the "Beloved", assuming now one form, now another, but rarely materialising as a human being. On page 22, for instance, she is a cat; "not a Persian cat, nor a tiger tabby; not a tortoiseshell nor a sleek blonde marmalade cat. She is a long-limbed, sinuous, fastidious little puss, with tiny paws and a coat of silk velvet . . ." On page 110 she partakes of the elements in an imaginary benison:

"She shall be light as air".
 "She shall be flowing as water".
 "Swift as a bird".
 "Mysterious as night".
 "Radiant as morning".
 "I place music in her limbs".
 "I breathe poetry into her eyes".

By page 112 she has become "a book, a painting, a poem which cannot be finished until she ceases to dance". Elsewhere she is, "not a fire bird, a blue bird or a humming bird, she is a dove or a swallow". Except, of course, in her occasional metamorphoses into Nefertiti, the classic figures of Ancient Greece . . . and the poised, superb *grandes dames* of the Edwardian epoch, on page 78.

In the beginning, Mr. Chappell confesses, his acceptance of the Vision was delayed. Like many

another convert he scoffed especially at "the cosily rounded cheeks, the big, dark, childish eyes" of the new Young Tregennis, which did not yet reveal the allure, to him at least, of dissipation. "To please me, a face, and more particularly a dancer's face, must look as though LIFE—yes, in capital letters and its most meaningful aspect—had been at it with destructive fingers, adding a faint weariness, a darkness under the eyes, a shadow below the cheek bones". It was not until Ashton produced his version of *Le Baiser de la Fée* that Mr. Chappell took the road to Damascus.

The not inconsiderable section of the book from which Miss Fonteyn is absent is filled by Mr. Chappell's prejudices (mainly against critics and people who go to watch the ballet—a vulgar, stupid lot for the most part); 'glimpses behind the scenes', with Mr. Chappell as a knowing guide (for he was once a dancer himself) and intriguing anecdotes related in a manner at once reminiscent of Evelyn Waugh and Angela Brazil. "We stayed up till dawn, dancing and giggling in the *boîtes* and bars. We were gaily hysterical. At five in the morning Freddy Ashton and myself might have been seen busily 'hitting one another in the Place Pigalle, followed by each of us haughtily taking separate taxis back to the same hotel". "You kicked me!" I said, turning indignantly on Claude Newman who was prancing away merrily behind me. De Valois, who was standing near by leaning against the proscenium arch, looked up quickly. "He didn't, you know", she said gravely. "And if you felt as though someone did—you've torn something".

"Words. Words. Words", the author cries in desperation. "So many words taking one directly nowhere". Exactly! It is a pity though that Miss Fonteyn should be involved in such tosh. For though it certainly cannot harm her or affect her deserved reputation it must—so long as it remains in print—provide her with constant embarrassment.

ALAN STOREY.

A German Dancing Film

Gérard Mulys writes from Nice that he has been engaged as *maitre de ballet* by a German company who went to Nice in April to make a new colour film. About forty dancers were needed so in addition to those already available in Nice he engaged twenty of the girls from the Festival Ballet who were then in Monte Carlo. This film, which is called *Johannes and the Thirteen Beauty Queens* is the first film a German company has ever made in another country. It is in Agfacolor and in the style of the big-scale American musicals.

THE RENAISSANCE OF FRENCH PANTOMIME

By MICHAEL CAREY

IT is a happy coincidence that whilst Chaplin's film *City Lights* has been successfully revived in and around Paris during the past few months, so at the same time, Marcel Marceau has launched his first 'West End' season of pantomime in the centre of Paris.

Marceau is a slim young man of medium height, sharp featured, and with sleepy eyes which suddenly come to life when he describes something. Completely lacking in pretentiousness and only intent on advancing in his art, he is sometimes to be found eating in a small working class restaurant in his quarter. There, surrounded by mechanics in their overalls and sturdy old craftsmen, he sits talking with a perpetual interest, like an observant bird, his half closed eyes never missing a gesture. One sees the fruit of this in his brilliant *Bip Burlesques*: a series of short solo sketches of various aspects of life, 'A tragic actor', 'The Metro', 'At a party', etc.

To understand and appreciate the importance of pantomime as an art it is useful to know its roots—for they are deep and rich. Its history goes back to the Greeks, and in the course of succeeding centuries it reappeared at different times, finally at its most virile with the *Commedia dell'Arte* of the 17th century.

The French pantomime which flourished in Paris a hundred years ago, and was romanticised in the film *Les Enfants du Paradis*, was directly descended from the Italian troupes which had found their way into France a hundred years before. Their influence can be seen in the plays of Molière. French pantomime owed its character rather than its style to the Italian *Commedia* whose improvisations often included speaking and were of a more boisterous and vulgar nature.

The style of the nineteenth century French pantomime was probably largely due to the talent of one man, Gaspard Debureau. What was he like, this legendary Debureau? Pages of description are unnecessary when we possess the famous sentence of Baudelaire: 'Personnage pâle comme la lune . . . mystérieux comme le silence, souple et muet comme le serpent, long et droit comme une potence . . .' It was Debureau who created Pierrot, the Pierrot we know through Fokine's *Carnaval*; pale and wistful and in love with the unattainable.

The pantomime which the Parisian public flocked to see in the 1830's at the Funambules was above all a popular art. Nothing esoteric or pretentious about it—Debureau was the Chaplin of the nineteenth

A SCENE FROM THE BALLET 'THE GIRLS FROM THE BLACK FOREST' IN THE NEW GERMAN FILM 'JOHANNES AND THE THIRTEEN BEAUTY QUEENS' REFERRED TO ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE



century. His biographer Jules Janin wrote: . . . That inexhaustible sarcasm with which he is so generous . . . above all he has the feeling of the people: he knows what they are laughing about, how they amuse themselves, what makes them angry; in fact he knows what the people admire, what they love, what they are; he has seen the people just as Mazurier has seen the monkeys, he has their spirit inside him. Look people, beat your wife, get drunk, caress the baby, make debts, pay your debts, marry off your daughter, laugh at your doctor, at your confessor, etc.' (my translation).

Deburau was succeeded by his son Charles, a mime equal to his father and with more subtlety and finesse. With the death of Charles Deburau in 1873 the French pantomime began to die as a popular entertainment. It had a few revivals as for example when Sarah Bernhardt performed as Pierrot in the '80's, and created the delightful *L'Enfant Prodigue*, recently revived in London.

There is ample material for reflection and theorising in searching the reason for these periodic bursts of popularity throughout the centuries, and although generalisation is dangerous on such a complex subject, one common factor does emerge. Whilst we have but scanty information as to the character of these past pantomimes we are never left in doubt as to who was their guiding star. Roscius was a great Roman actor and mime. Dominique was the leading Harlequin of the Italian Commedia. It was Deburau who initiated the French pantomime. Today? Unquestionably the silent film period can be considered as the twentieth century equivalent and with it rises the inimitable Chaplin. Which brings us back to Marceau, for I venture to predict that given several European tours with adequate financial backing, the theatrical historian of the next century may well be able to add this artist to the celebrated list.

Marceau is still a young man—twenty-eight years old. It is interesting to notice that he owes his technique not to a dance background but to the legitimate theatre. He was a pupil of Charles Dullin the famous actor who died in 1950, and to whom the contemporary French drama owes so much. It was in Dullin's school that he came in contact with Decroux who is still teaching mime in Paris. Decroux had been a pupil of the actor Copeau, who was very interested in mime and stimulated him to formulate a system of teaching mime technique. Marceau worked for some years with Decroux and undoubtedly owes much to him. He has, however, taken the technique further and by virtue of his own physical facility added to it, arriving at a style closer to ballet, finer than that of the older man.



Photograph by Keystone, Paris

MARCEL MARCEAU IN 'SPORTIF' ONE OF HIS 'BIP BURLESQUES'

(Lower) MARCEAU IS MEASURED FOR THE COAT IN HIS PANTOMIME OF GOGOL'S 'THE OVERCOAT'

Photograph by Etienne Bertrand Weill



I have said that it is significant that Marceau owes his training to the drama rather than the dance, and I would stress this again because it points a lesson for the English theatre in particular and European ballet in general. It is commonplace that the French as a people express themselves more freely by gesture than the English or Scandinavians. This is naturally reflected in the theatre and to see, for example, a classical play performed at the Comédie Française is like seeing a spoken ballet. It is also true that this style of acting becomes annoying in some modern plays where emotional moments produce farcical exaggeration.

On the other hand modern French ballet is rapidly rolling down the hill towards the circus and most of artists are preoccupied with acrobatic considerations to a grotesque degree. It is to the rich mimetic tradition of the French theatre that Marceau has turned to shape his style, and in so doing he constantly echoes—or reflects—the various theatrical dance techniques from classical ballet to Javanese dance. For a person at all sensitive to expressive movement a visit to an English playhouse is today a painful experience. The standard of vocal acting is often high but mimetically zero. And yet ballet enjoys an unprecedented popularity all over England at present.

In France, too, ballet is popular and every week sees fresh posters advertising dazzling clusters of stars to perform in Paris—and yet Marceau owes little to contemporary ballet sources for they have nothing but stale clichés to offer.

Where then is the lesson for the English theatre and European ballet?

I suggest that the pantomimes of Marcel Marceau

can give a double lesson. On the one hand to the English drama whose excellence is marred by its *gaucherie*. And on the other hand to European ballet whose artists will soon be including trapezes in their travelling equipment.

I have not attempted to describe the pieces at present performed by Marceau's group because such description would be superfluous. It would be as though I tried to describe the flight of a bird.

Let it be said, however, that in each of the three mime plays he has expressed that aspect of the respective themes which can only be expressed through movement. The most successful is undoubtedly his adaptation of Gogol's story *The Overcoat*. In this, by means of an ingenious decor and a series of pithy and grotesque scenes he paints the tragedy of a man whose life becomes dominated by a symbol, and does so with a pathos and humour only equalled in my experience by Chaplin.

As Marceau himself recognises, the modern audience is likely to have difficulty in adapting itself to the inevitable conventions of mime, and he has chosen an excellent method of solving this problem. He begins his programme by several short and brilliant sketches of everyday life—the previously mentioned *Bip Burlesques*. They are mostly humorous and it is illuminating to notice how the audience gradually become accustomed to the strange medium, and the guffaws multiply till with the final number the house is rocking.

But I repeat, description is superfluous, instead—where is the manager who will give the English public the chance to enjoy this virile and excellent entertainment?

TELEVISION SURVEY

By LISA GORDON SMITH

DANCERS OF TOMORROW, the second programme of this title, was produced by Philip Bate on May 7th. As in the first programme, the idea was to show the potential ballerina and *danseur* material at present in the ballet schools; the students to whom we may look for the future personnel of our ballet companies.

Nobody realises more clearly than Philip Bate how many disasters can overtake the best of cups between saucer and lip, and these programmes were intended less as a prediction than as an indication.

As the first programme sampled some of the leading London schools, the second performed the same service for the provinces. It was easy to see that London, the Mecca of dancers, has no monopoly of promising students.

On May 21st Christian Simpson produced another of his experimental programmes, this time entitled *Choreography for Cameras*. It was an interesting development of Simpson's earlier work, and, although his usual hobby-horses were not absent (we noted the customary forest of columns and some magnificent "takes" of that portion of the back which is so well defined in tights) it was a logical and welcome advance on previous programmes of the type.

The first item, entitled *The Dream*, was an interpretation by Geraldine Stephenson with an accompaniment of sound devised, we are told, by herself; but it could as well have been a particularly vile piece of malice from the meteorological office, for we heard the sighing of winds, the breaking of waves and the swishing of rain. Geraldine Stephenson



Photograph by Feature Press Photo Agency

JOHN GILPIN AS NARCISSUS WITH NATHALIE KRASSOVSKA AS ECHO AND DOMINI CALLAGHAN AND YVONNE CARTIER AS TWO NYMPHS IN THE RECENTLY TELEVISED 'LIVING IMAGE'

postured among clouds in the midst of a rotating prism.

Dreadful as all the ingredients sound, there is but one thing to be said for the finished product, and that is that it succeeded in being a very fine piece of experimental television. One would not, perhaps, like to see such a thing too often nor for too long; but, as it stood, it was a very interesting and quite enjoyable piece of entertainment, and a solid paving-stone in the path of teleballet.

It was followed by *Living Image*, a new ballet presented by arrangement with Ballet Workshop.

Choreography by Jack Carter, music by Leonard Salzedo and costumes by Norman MacDowell combined to give credence to a somewhat novel rendering of the old story of Narcissus and Echo. These characters were danced respectively by John Gilpin and Nathalie Krassovska (on loan from the Festival Ballet).

The part of Echo did not appear to have inspired Jack Carter: on the other hand he devised some really excellent choreography for John Gilpin who did it full justice. The reflections in the pool were extremely well contrived and so was the terror-stricken flight of Narcissus as he perpetually found himself face to face with his 'living image', but as a re-telling of a famous legend it lacked clarity and if it was intended to have some other significance I am afraid this escaped me. The costumes were exceptionally ugly and the setting—a plethora of pillars—was the reverse of pastoral.

YOU, TOO, CAN BE A CHOREOGRAPHER

By DONALD WRAY

THE monthly meeting of the Upper Balham Ballet Society was held last Tuesday in the Presbyterian Hall. Windy; light rain.

The chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the guest speaker, and upsetting a small jug of water. To say that he was proud to introduce Mr. Crêpedechine would be feeble; he was pleased. Mr. Crêpedechine, as everyone knew, was not only a brilliant dancer and choreographer, but also—er—a brilliant choreographer and dancer. The chairman was glad to see so many well-known ballet personalities in the audience; he knew they would contribute to the discussion at the end of the lecture, though not to the subsequent collection; and, no doubt, they would help him express thanks for what, he was sure, was to be a most interesting talk. (Loud jeering laughter from the many well-known ballet personalities in the audience).

Mr. Crêpedechine then delivered his paper; he said this was no novelty as he had been delivering papers since childhood. (Pause: dead silence). He was going to talk about the problems confronting the young dancer wanting to break into the choreography racket. Too often these young men—and the girls too, bless their hearts—thought they merely had to Express Something Within Them That Simply Must Come Out, to shatter with their Deep-Felt Sincerity, to pour emotion from their pent-up hearts, then all was done, all accomplished. This was a charming conceit; but we were not in the Middle Ages. The young choreographer, if he wanted to make a name for himself—and most of them did make up their names for themselves, by the way—must attempt to hit three targets simultaneously, even if this meant presenting three new ballets on the same evening. The three targets were: the critics, the company's artistic

director, and, both last and least, the public. Mr. Crépédachine then dealt with these requirements in turn.

The critics. As the principal characteristics of a critic were senility, asininity and irascibility, the critics would be soothed only by familiar music, classical technique, and a coy, retiring decor. Abstract ballet met the bill in all respects. Fortunately, this was the easiest and cheapest type of ballet to conceive and produce. Well loved music should be chosen (consultation with Miss Doris Arnold would be advisable), and some dancing slapped on to it. Choreography was simple: just push the boys and girls around in the same shapes as the dots on the score, wave their arms and legs when the orchestration got fraught, twiddle 'em round fast in the frilly bits, and move 'em slow and mournful when the music got sad. Mr. Crépédachine earnestly recommended this type of ballet to the student choreographer. There was no need to commission costumes—the thing could be performed in practice dress; this then revealed “the purity of line” and pleased the critics no end. The only difficulty would be in finding music that hadn't been reused already. Mr. Crépédachine suggested some of Mahler's teenier symphonies, or, perhaps, a gay little *soupeçon* of Shostakovich. If there happened to be a short tubby girl in the company, a cello concerto would be a jolly novelty, with Chunky representing the solo instrument.

The kind of ballet most likely to please the artistic director of the company, Mr. Crépédachine suggested, was the psycho-sociological ballet, or “freud egos on a ham”, as he jestingly called it. Here the music should be harsh, angular and percussive, with frequent clashes on the cymbals. Most of the dancing would consist of raising the eyebrows together at the centre of the forehead, clutching the hair with the hands, and scrabbling about distractedly on the floor. The stage, he advised, should be kept in near-darkness, with spotlights occasionally picking out the Complexes and Traumas scrapping amongst themselves. Such decor as could be discerned through the gloom should resemble—as, no doubt, Wordsworth would have said—emulsion recollected in tranquillity. Suitable subject matter was difficult to find. The Children of Light and Darkness had already been done, but Hormones v. Endocrine Glands in their struggle to determine the final personality of Man could be tried, or, as a broader theme, Humanity at Grips with Environment (Groans from audience). There were no end to the possibilities (Redoubled groans).

Finally, there should be a ballet to please the public. After all, they pay to get in (cries of “Shame!”) and their wishes should be born in mind, though not, of course, pandered to. For them Mr. Crépédachine recommended the Shocker ballet. The Shocker should

defy all man-made laws; flout bourgeois morality; sneer at middle class conventions; and get its picture in the Sunday papers. Decor should be entirely in blood, sweat and tears; for the dancers to wear costumes at all would be a weakness, a pandering to convention. The theme should be as Sensational as Life Itself, Reality with the Blinds Up! Away with hypocritical pretensions! Give them the Truth in all its lovely sordid Brutality! There should be footnotes to the programmes.* The Lord Chamberlain should see it twice, then book for the entire season. It was advisable for the choreographer to prepare a statement to give the blushing reporters—something like this: “. . . It may, conceivably, appear salacious to the man in the street, but we ballet-lovers don't look at it that way. It is nothing to us . . .”.

Mr. Crépédachine concluded his paper by mentioning that popular items in ballet programmes were the gay little trifles, the merest bagatelles of *pas de deux*. Jolly confections with titles like *Chattanooga Tutu* or *Pierrot and Pirouette* would always be received delightedly. Finally, he wished all young choreographers the best of luck. Comments and questions were invited.

* This ballet is unsuitable for children under sixteen; it is lethal for all over sixty.

TATIANA RIABOUCHINSKA AND VASSILI TRUNOFF AS THE DOLL
AND THE BLACKAMOOR IN 'PETROUCHKA'

Photograph by Gilbert Adams



Dr. Fletcher, the critic, congratulated Mr. Crépédechine on his lecture, which he supported in the main; he was disappointed, however, that there had been no mention of the projection of the aura of aristocratic nobility so sublimely manifested in Abstract Ballet. Mr. Crépédechine, replying, said that his respect for Dr. Fletcher's opinion was tempered only by his regret for his misplaced idealism.

Mr. Tabernacle, the dancer and designer, thanked the speaker for his brave attempt at a difficult subject. Nevertheless, he lamented that no reference had been made to the Eskimo State Ballet's contribution to modern choreography, and, in particular, its significant symbolism of the haunted walrus. Mr. Crépédechine was grateful for Mr. Tabernacle's contribution to the discussion; it was unfortunate that Mr. Tabernacle's obliquity of thought made his statements irrelevant, though perhaps of interest to students of psychoneurosis.

Mr. Cackle, the magazine-owner and oyster-eater, said that when he was in Sidi-Berrani . . . Mr. Crépédechine, interrupting, said that Mr. Cackle could go and take a run.

The meeting broke up, several chairs being overturned. The chairman switched out the lights, and handed the key back to the caretaker.

Ballet Vocabulary (5)

Compiled by LEO KERSLEY and JANET SINCLAIR
PAS CISEAUX

The dancer springs and throws his feet wide apart, to front and back (*à la quatrième*) or to either side (*de côté*) which latter is sometimes called *écarté en l'air*. His feet close on landing.

The male solo in *Les Rendezvous* (Ashton) begins with the dancer rising on his toes, followed by a *pas ciseaux de côté*. He repeats this twice more and then performs several turns. The complete sequence is then repeated. Lifar and Vaganova describe a different *pas ciseaux* which is a compound step consisting of a *grand pas de basque* followed by a *battement balançoire*. The dancer stands with the left foot behind him and throws it high in front as he springs from the right, which rises to pass the left on which the dancer lands. The right leg then swings back past the supporting leg and is raised behind him, while the body leans forward.

ECHAPPE

The dancer sharply slides both feet simultaneously out to either side, or to front and back, rising on to the toes at the conclusion of the movement. This may be done with a slight spring on to the toes, or by jumping in and out of the positions in which case a beat may be added during the jumps. When the movements are performed outwards in this way the

échappé is *en dehors*: when the dancer reverses the movement and brings both feet together from their extended position, the *échappé* is *en dedans*.

Shortly after the commencement of the female dancer's variation in the Blue Bird *pas de deux*, when she first comes down to the front left-hand corner of the stage, she performs *échappés* (out, in, out, in) on tiptoe, followed by three hops on her left toe while the right foot is extended in front, brought to the left knee and extended at the back, and a little *pas de bourrée couru* on the spot: the whole sequence is repeated twice more, travelling diagonally backwards across the stage. In the last act of *Coppélia*, Franz begins his solo with four *échappés* jumped and beaten.

EMBOITE SUR LES POINTES (see also PETITS JETES)

Emboîtés resemble the movement of plaiting, and are usually seen in a series. The dancer stands on her toes with her legs together, then swings her back leg a little to the side and closes it in front of the other. If the foot is taken from the front and closed behind the step is DEBOITE.

The first steps of the eight attendants on the Lilac Fairy in the Coda of the Prologue to *The Sleeping Beauty* are sixteen *emboîtés sur les pointes*, coming forward, which they perform together, arms round one another's waists. Both the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Prelude dancer in *Les Sylphides* perform *emboîtés sur les pointes* at the end of their solos. (To be continued)

Maggio Musicale Fiorentino

THE highlight of this year's fourteenth annual Festival in Florence was undoubtedly the ballet company assembled for the occasion by Milloss, and trained by Shabolevsky. Preliminary performances had been given at Easter in the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, and Tomanova was due to appear as a guest artist, but here I am concerned only with the basic company and its repertoire.

This centred round three new works by Milloss, *Deliciae Populi* (Casella/Severini), *Misteri* (Bartok/Nepo) and *Don Juan* (Gluck/Cassandre). The first of these is yet another *Commedia del 'arte' divertissement*, admittedly better than Lichine's and danced with spirit by Jacqueline Moreau (on leave from the Paris Opera), Wladimir Skouratoff, Violette Verdy, Wladimir Oukhtoumsky, Xenia Palley and Filippo Monicci, but nevertheless mainly useful for closing a programme.

Misteri, however, is a vastly different proposition, in which to an accompaniment of strings, percussion

and celeste is portrayed "the multiplicity of man in conflict with himself". Jean Babilée, in red, is the central figure, and his abstract adversaries are Yvette Chauviré, in blue, Nathalie Philippart, in green, Vladimir Skouratoff, in yellow, and Deryk Mendel in a combination of the three colours. The action closely follows the accompaniment, but here, unlike Balanchine, Milloss is concerned with the individual rather than the mass and has provided Babilée with some moments of fine frenzy in a work which is constantly stimulating.

In *Don Juan*, Milloss has created a role obviously after Babilée's own heart, in which the various facets of a personality are shown no longer at variance with themselves, but with the world. The familiar story unfolds against a monumental white setting with Babilée resplendent in silver wig and gold brocade and Philippart (Donna Elvira) sleek-haired and enchanting in white, outlined with black. Deryk Mendel contributes a neat character study as Sganarello, and Vanna Busolini and Xenia Palley make brief appearances as a courtesan and a peasant girl, but throughout Babilée never ceases to dominate the stage. His every movement adds to his characterisation, whether in a formal dance or an amorous frolic with a group of young maidens, whether disdainful or rakish, with Philippart always at hand to complement his portrait with surprisingly soft appeal. Hell is achieved by a transformation scene where the setting changes into tongues of flame and the courtiers into furies, as the statue of the Commendatore (Oukhtomsky) curses the Don who falls backwards, dead, in the best Babilée tradition.

Babilée's own *L'Amour et son Amour*, restaged with new costumes and decor designed by Cocteau for the Marquis de Cuevas, has lost much of its enchantment in the process. Cupid is now all in white, Psyche sphinx-like in dark grey, while heavy black wings covered with white hieroglyphics destroy the balance of the setting. The blue empyrean has been replaced by scorched earth which I for one much regret. Chauviré's own version of *Romeo and Juliet*, first performed during her visit to the U.S.A. last year, has some beautiful moments (the final clasping of hands in death, reminiscent of Darrieux and Boyer in *Meyerling* is most effective) but the Tchaikovsky overture is simply not long enough in itself to allow for the telling of a story of such proportions and complications, as Lifar's version already proved. Even by using only one half of the stage, and while the scene is distractingly changed behind the curtain covering the other (shades of Jean-Louis Barrault!), the effect is one of panic rather than of the serenity demanded by

this greatest of all love stories. The costumes too I found garish — Skouratoff in emerald velvet and a blond wig looked moonstruck rather than "star-crossed". (This may have been due to the fact, however, that he appears in *all* except the Babilée/Philippart ballets!) On the other hand, the Pierre Balmain costumes are the best thing about *Notturmo*, arranged by Gsovsky to Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. Skouratoff, unlucky at cards, visits the boudoir of Chauviré, to find that he is lucky in love. The rival is danced by Oukhtomsky and the maid by Violette Verdy (formerly Nelly Guillermin) in this trifle which is nothing more than a curtain-raiser.

It is rumoured that the Company may remain together permanently, which would be a definite gain for the ballet world, since already they have achieved a remarkable homogeneity and sense of style.

J. STUART BARKER.

Editor's Note—As we now know, Galina Ulanova with her partner, Jari Kondratov, appeared at the Teatro Comunale on June 14th. An account of this occasion will be given by Ferdinand Reyna in the next issue.

WHILE THEY LAST

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